

Washington State Patrol

Media Release

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Emergency Planning Proves its Worth

Dayton, WA— On Tuesday, August 22, 2006, the Columbia Complex wild-land fire gained territory as it approached the Booker Rest Home and Annex. Concerned for the patient's safety, Administrator Bruce Grimshaw ordered an emergency evacuation of the rest home at 8:45 a.m. All 46 residents were safely relocated to the Seneca Seed Plant (formerly the Seneca Cannery) by 10:00 a.m., with supplies, and before any smoke could adversely affect the occupants.

Two months prior, Deputy State Fire Marshal Duane VanBeek recommended posting emergency evacuation plans in the facility's nursing station to ensure an efficient evacuation in the event of an emergency. Administrator Grimshaw commented "Our staff performed exactly as they were supposed to. The posted evacuation plans were followed precisely, allowing us to safety and effectively relocate every one."

"Proper emergency pre-planning is one of the most effective precautionary tools we have," said Acting State Fire Marshal Mike Matlick. "Being proactive keeps the odds on our side. Simply reacting to such unplanned events will play against us and incite panic contributing to the loss of lives," he explained.

The Booker Rest Home's staff and residents exemplified themselves through their actions during the emergency evacuation.

For additional fire safety tips visit the Washington State Patrol – Office of the State Fire Marshal web page at www.wsp.wa.gov or contact your local fire department.

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